

Family TO Family

bulletin

Reaching out to Washington families who have children—birth to 6—with disabilities

Recognizing and celebrating the uniqueness and diversity of families



Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program

SUMMER 2002

Anni's Story of Transition

by Julie Ann Avila

Our family didn't have a "typical transition", but we did have a smooth transition because our family realized the importance of this for Anni, our family, and her future class. We started attending the local PTSA and special needs committee of the school we thought we would like Anni to attend one year before her 3rd birthday. Six months before her 3rd birthday, I took some classes with teachers and staff from the school district, which

allowed me to get to know them as people and educators. Three months before Anni's 3rd birthday, Anni began visiting the program into which we hoped she would eventually be placed. As we knew what Anni's needs were and now knew what the strengths of the staff and program were, we were able to successfully advocate for her placement into the same program her neurotypically developing brother attends. As the classroom staff and school district staff had had a chance to get to know Anni, they were willing to give her an opportunity in a very inclusive environment, despite her many needs. We carefully crafted an IEP that provides special education program with related services and

supports that Anni requires. We designed it with input of not only the district staff, but also with input from Anni's medical staff, private therapists, and community program staff. I volunteer in Anni's classroom often and substitute teach within the district on a regular basis. Anni is doing very well and we continue to have a good relationship with our district. She is moving towards our vision. It is our hope that one day she will be able to tear up our vision, and replace it with one of her own. Along the way, we have learned much about special education law and policy, but we have found that the ongoing productive relationships to be the most important factor in our child's success.

Greetings Families:

By
Sandy Loerch,
Director,
ITEIP

Welcome to the third Family to Family bulletin. This issue explores the topic of transition. What is transition and how does it affect your child and family? Transition is a time of change and movement. When planning occurs, transitions can be smooth for everyone. Without preparation, transition and change may be confusing and scary.

There are many types of transitions that children and families experience: from hospital to home, from home to child care, from an early intervention (Birth to Three) program into another community program or preschool services. When a child turns three, transition may be to a formal school based program or informal community setting. The



payers and providers of the services also change at this transition point. It is important for all of us that each child and family experiences a smooth and positive transition as they leave early intervention at age three. As with all change, starting early with careful planning can be helpful during this time of change.

The Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP) is working with families, many other state agency partners and local providers to identify ways to improve all types of transitions

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Washington Project STEPS

Washington is one of several states affiliated with the Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools (Project STEPS). Project STEPS is a national outreach project for supporting interagency transition services for young children and their families. Research shows that young children sustain the academic, social and emotional gains made in quality early learning environments when there are positive transitions throughout early childhood and to elementary school.

Washington's Project STEPS is spearheaded by a state-level interagency team that brings together representatives from health, education, Head Start, early intervention, child care, family support, special education, ECEAP, and other state-level agencies that support early childhood activities. The State STEPS Team takes a broad, interdisciplinary approach to transition and explores ways to support all transitions for all children, birth to age eight, throughout early childhood, from birth, to home, to child care, to preschool, to kindergarten and to elementary school. The State STEPS Team supports the development of transition systems at the state, regional, and local level for all children in these ways:

- * Supporting communities in the development of integrated, collaborative transition systems for young children;
- * Providing training and technical assistance to local STEPS teams; and
- * Supporting integrated, consistent policies, which result in best practices.

Since the Fall 1998, the State Project STEPS Team has sponsored six three-day training events for 25 community teams. The STEPS training supports the development of community-wide interagency transition systems for all children (birth through age 8) and their families. Through the training, community teams develop an understanding

of the components of transition combined with a process for developing and implementing a transition system for young children and families. After the training, community teams meet on a regular basis to implement the components of a community transition system, including an administrative structure, interagency collaboration, family involvement, child preparation, and staff involvement.

Community STEPS teams have described a number of accomplishments that result from their work together. These accomplishments include:

1. Improved communication and networking. The cross-agency nature of the community STEPS teams has improved communication and networking in many communities. The most commonly reported improvements in communication were between early intervention services providers and public school staff. Many examples of stronger communication between Head Start/ECEAP staff and public schools also were reported. Community teams have strengthened connections with child care providers in their communities.

2. Increased opportunities for cross-agency training. Community STEPS teams have worked diligently to arrange cross-agency training to support transitions. Training has included:

- * Organizing cross-agency training for staff of early intervention programs and schools to learn about and plan improved practice in transitioning children from Part C Early Intervention Services to Part B Public School Services
- * Getting preschool and kindergarten teachers together to transfer records and discuss curriculum alignment
- * Developing work sample portfolios that can travel with the child from preschool through grade school

3. Cross-agency products and information for parents. A number of community STEPS teams have developed written materials to help families better understand transitions. For example, the Asotin County STEPS team developed a video for parents explaining the transition from early intervention services and what families might expect during this process.

4. Increased early literacy activities. A few community STEPS teams have used transition as the focal point for community-wide efforts to increase the quality and quantity of early literacy activities. For example, the Cowlitz County-Longview/Kelso STEPS team is guided by its vision that every child in the community should have access to quality early literacy activities in order to prepare for and experience a smooth transition to kindergarten. Another community STEPS team in Mason County prepares packets of summer activities for preschool children (and grade school children as well) to help prepare them for school in the fall.

5. Increased awareness of decision-makers about transition. Community STEPS teams are working to increase awareness of agency supervisors and local school boards about the importance of transition in the community. The role and importance of quality early childhood programs is also part of the message. A number of community STEPS teams have made presentations to school boards and agency decision-makers to gain support for local efforts.

Since its inception in 1998, Project STEPS has made a significant impact on transition activities in local communities across the state. For more information about Project STEPS, contact Carol Hall at ESD 112, (360) 750-7500, ext 295, e mail: carol.hall@esd112.k12.wa.us WEBSITE: <http://www.esd112.k12.wa.us/steps> or for **Local Team Contacts** see page 6.

Information & Helpful hints

*from the ITEIP family
booklet, "A Family's Guide
to Early Intervention
Services in Washington
State"*

What happens at age three? At least 6 months before your child turns three, your Family Resources Coordinator will assist you in planning a move to the next service provider or agency serving your child. This can change where and how services are provided. In early intervention, this change is called transition. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires a written plan for this transition. A transition plan meeting must take place at least 90 days before your child turns three. Your transition plan will identify special education or community-based services your child may need. Your Family Resources Coordinator will ask you to sign a permission form so the next agency or service provider can be contacted to plan for transition. A meeting between you, your Family Resources Coordinator, service provider(s) and the local school district will be set up. The school district determines if your child is eligible for preschool special education services. They will discuss the results of their tests with you and give you information about your rights. If your child is eligible, their services will be provided through an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Your Family Resources Coordinator will assist you in planning a move to other possible services if your child is not eligible for special education preschool services.

Tips for the Transition Meeting:

- gather as much information as possible about the proposed change
- ask about possible program options or choices
- ask what training and supports the new program offers families
- visit the new program before the change
- ask for written materials and learn the procedures for entering and participating in the new program
- provide as much information about your child as possible to the new program
- talk with your child about the changes, and help with questions or fears they may have—include their voice in the planning

in understanding the educational system for preschoolers and school-age children, and provide support when learning your child has a disability or chronic health need, and help as your child transitions from early intervention to preschool, preschool to school, and from high school to adult life. PAVE offers workshops on many subjects including birth to three early intervention services, special education, transition, cultural diversity, family-centered care, military issues, communication skills, etc. PAVE maintains a lending library with books, audiotapes and videotapes. PAVE has information about resources and specialists in your community, starting parent support groups, and existing support groups. PAVE also has volunteers in many local communities to support parents as they learn about the systems that provide services to their child with special needs.

One project of PAVE is STOMP (Specialized Training of Military Parents). STOMP provides information and training on military and other regulations affecting special education for military parents worldwide through workshops, phone consultation and presentations. STOMP also maintains a list of on-line resources relevant to families in the military. Another project of PAVE is the Parent Participation Coordinator for the Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program, which provides technical assistance, training, and information regarding IDEA and early intervention services to parents, families, state agencies, contractors and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

PAVE maintains a wonderful website at <http://www.washingtonpave.org>. It contains information on upcoming workshops and events, access to the highly informative PAVE Pipeline newsletter, a discussion board, chat room opportunities, links and resources, and a great section with answers to frequently asked questions about the special education process. One strength of the website is the access to a broad array of links and resources that cross all disability categories, regions, and age groups.

Contact Information: Washington PAVE
6316 So. 12th St., Tacoma, WA 98465
Telephone: 1-800-5-PARENT
Fax: 253-566-8052
E-mail: wapave9@washingtonpave.com

Washington PAVE (Parents Are Vital in Education)

Your child is turning three, and it is time for transition to school. Now what? Where can parents turn when they want to learn about issues of educational advocacy? Who can explain what ADA, IDEA and IEP mean? Can you take a class in all of this? The answers are Washington PAVE and yes. Washington PAVE, a parent-directed organization, exists to increase

independence, empowerment, and future opportunities for children with special needs, their families and communities, through training, information, referral and support. PAVE has 6 offices across the state, and the majority of PAVE staff are parents who have children with special needs.

PAVE can assist in obtaining early intervention through two years of age, help

State and National Transition Resources

STATE TRANSITION RESOURCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES INFANT TODDLER EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (ITEIP)

Directs the statewide system of IDEA early intervention services.

(360) 902-8488 (Voice)

(360) 904-7864 (TTY)

Website:

www.wa.gov/dshs/iteip/iteip.html

For further information and referral to a Family Resources Coordinator (FRC)

Contact:

HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES

1-800-322-2588 for the name of an FRC in your local area.

Website:

www.hmhbwa.org

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (OSPI)

Get a free copy of the Family-Educator Guide to Special Education Services in Washington State from your local school district or OSPI. For a booklet in hard copy, call (360) 725-6075.

Website:

www.k12.wa.us

WASHINGTON PAVE

1-800 5 PARENT (1-800 572-7368)

A statewide parent training and information center providing assistance to families who have children with disabilities, ages birth through adulthood.

Website:

www.washingtonpave.org

FAMILY EDUCATOR PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (FEPP)

A statewide project that encourages families, educators and community agencies to work together in supporting children and youth who need special education services. Call 1-888-754-8798 for more information.

Website:

www.arcwa.org

WASHINGTON STATE PARENT TO PARENT

1-800-821-5927

A statewide parent network providing emotional support and information to parents who have young children with disabilities or developmental delays

Website:

www.arcwa.org

THE ARC OF WASHINGTON STATE

1-888-754-8798

Promotes the education, health, self-sufficiency, self-advocacy, inclusion and choices of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Website:

www.arcwa.org

NATIONAL TRANSITION RESOURCES

ZERO TO THREE

Zero to Three is the nation's leading resource on the first three years of life. We are a national non-profit charitable organization whose aim is to strengthen and support families, practitioners and communities to promote the healthy development of babies and toddlers. <http://www.zerotothree.org>

NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD TA CENTER

(FORMERLY NEC*TAS)

A national technical assistance consortium working to support states, jurisdictions, and others to improve services and results for young children with disabilities and their families.

<http://www.nectas.unc.edu/>

Tips from one parent on successful transitions

- Share your vision for your child - *What do you want to happen?*
- Make sure the transition plan supports your vision - *How can you make your vision real?*
- Talk about transition in the beginning of your experience in early intervention.
- Think about the possible options - look into the future. *When your child turns three - where do you want to go?*
- Know your child's rights - *Where can I go for more information?*
- Talk with other families who have gone through transition - *Can they share helpful tips?*
- Work closely with your Early Intervention Team: FRC, Birth to Three provider, school staff - *Who else do you wish to involve in the transition process?*
- Look for resources on transition - *Where can I go for more information?*

Benton-Franklin Counties Transition Process

*by Shelley Ellis (FRC)
with assistance from
Linda Lively, Myra
Pacheco, Sylvia Rosas
and Carrieann Theime*

Greetings Families:

Continued from page 1

This article explains how one local area - the Benton Franklin Infant Toddler Program in Benton and Franklin Counties handles transitions for children involved in early intervention services. Every county handles transitions a bit differently. To understand how transition is handled in your area, talk to your Family Resources Coordinator (FRC).

One of the Family Resources Coordinators (FRC), responsibilities is to help families as they experience the transition process. This may seem simple, but there are many different types of transitions. There are transitions between states, or between counties when families move. There is transition out of the early intervention services due to parent choice or if the child is typically developing. Transitions occur in many ways. The most common type of transition for children in early intervention is from birth to three services into a three to five year old early childhood special education program within the school system.

The first type of transition is to a different state. Family Resources Coordinators (FRCs) have a nationwide network of Part C Coordinators. With the parent's permission the FRC contacts the Part C Coordinator and makes a referral to a contact in the area to which the family is moving. The family can call the FRC when they have reached their destination and the FRC can then send all the information to them and make the appropriate referrals.

The second type of transition is from one county to another. All children receiving early intervention services are entered into the State Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program data system. When a child is moving

to a different county, the FRC, with the permission of the family, contacts the Lead FRC in the county that the family is moving to and gives the FRC access to the child's information on the data system. The child's IFSP is transitioned from the current FRC to the new FRC. The family is given the contact information for the county they are moving to.

The third type of transition happens when a child no longer shows a delay and/or the family no longer has a concern about their child's development. The child is then transitioned out of services. When the FRC transitions them out of services, a letter is sent to the family along with an exit survey. The FRC then schedules an exit visit to be done either by phone or as a home visit.

The most common type of transition occurs at age 3, from early intervention services into a preschool special education program for 3 -5 year olds. FRCs talk about transition with families at the point of intake and at every Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) review. Six months prior to the third birthday, the FRC notifies the family of the need for transition planning. Three months before the child's 3rd birthday, the FRC will send out a letter to inform the family that it is time to start the transition process and that the local school district will be contacting them to schedule a meeting for this purpose. The letter also contains names and numbers of individuals the family can contact after the child has turned three to help address the families concerns about their child's medical and developmental needs. An exit survey, along with a self addressed stamped envelope for the family to complete and return, is sent thirty days prior to the third birthday. The FRC then schedules an exit visit to be done either by phone or as a home visit. An exit visit is done to make sure that the family is well connected with all the community resources to assist them beyond the age of three.

for children, age birth to eight, including children with developmental disabilities and/or delays. Washington agencies have formed the Sequenced Transition to Education in the Public Schools (STEPS). STEPS' vision is to ensure that all children in Washington State experience seamless transitions from one early care and education environment to another and into education in the public schools so that children are prepared and will be successful in school.

ITEIP will continue to work with local and state partners on projects and activities in improving and supporting smooth transitions for all children within the state. We encourage you to share this information with other families and those interested in supporting young children and families in their many transitions through life. By working with and listening to families on what each family and child needs during the transition process - we all learn together - parents, professionals and community members.

PLEASE SEND ALL NEWSLETTER CORRESPONDENCE TO THE ATTENTION OF:
Cassie Johnston, PAVE
6316 S. 12th Street, Tacoma, WA 98465
or FAX (360) 902-8497 e mail: weecare@olywa.net

Family to Family Bulletin is produced by the Family Leadership Team which is a standing committee of the Washington State Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families (SICC). ■ The mission of the Family Leadership Team is that families are represented at all levels of the state's early intervention system for children with developmental delays, age birth to six. ■ The mission of ITEIP is to work with Tribes, state agencies, & local communities to assure that all eligible infants & toddlers (birth to 3 years old) with disabilities/ delays & their families in Washington State have access to individualized, quality early intervention services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C.
Editorial Board Members: Sandra Lund, Cassie Johnston, Karen Lindsay, Sandy Loerch & Ginger Kwan. **Correspondent-at-large:** Julie Ann Avila.
Staff: Kathy Blodgett.

Washington State Project STEPS

*Smooth
Transitions
for All
Children*

STEPS Community Teams

Asotin County STEPS Team

Team Contact:
Linda Hall
Asotin, School District
PO Box 489, Asotin WA 99402
Phone: (509) 758-3309
FAX: (509) 758-8139
Email:
jhall@jawbone.clarkston.wednet.edu

Central Valley Community Transition Team

Team Contact:
Marcia Harrington, Coordinator, ECEAP
Central Valley School District #356
1512 N Borker, Greenacres WA 99106
Phone: (509) 892-5503
FAX: (509) 892-3145
Email: mharrington@cvsd.org

Cheney School District

Team Contact:
C.J. Johnson
Cheney School District
Windsor Elementary
112 S Elliott Street
Cheney, WA 98801
Phone: (509) 663-7117
FAX: (509) 624-9107
Email: cijohnson@cheney.sd.org

ESD #113 Community Team/Grays Harbor

Team Contact:
Nancy Liedtke
Aberdeen School District
359 N Division, Aberdeen, WA 98520
Phone: (360) 538-2190
FAX: (360) 538-2014
Email: nliedtke@ASD5.org

Grandview Public Schools Team

Team Contact:
Minerva Morales
Grandview School District
913 W 2nd Street, Grandview, WA 98930
Phone: (509) 882-2271
Email:
mmorales@grandview.wednet.edu

Cowlitz County-Longview/Kelso Community Team

Team Contact:
Ann Cavanaugh
Longview School District
28 & Lilac St., Longview, WA 98632
Phone: (360) 575-7008
FAX: (360) 575-7233
Email: acavanaugh@longview.k12.wa.us

Clark County (ESD 112) Community Team

Team Contact:
Carol Hall
ESD 112
2500 NE 65th Avenue
Vancouver WA 98661-6812
Phone: (360) 750-7500, Ext. 275
FAX: (360) 906-1010
Email: carol.hall@esd112.k12.wa.us

Mason County STEPS Team

Team Contact:
Dianne Lenning
Special Services, Shelton School District
700 S 1st Street, Shelton WA 98584
Phone: (360) 426-2151
FAX: (360) 426-9727

Oroville Community Team

Team Contact:
Kay Sibley
Oroville School District
1008 Ironwood, Oroville WA 98844
Phone: (509) 476-3332
FAX: (509) 476-3832

San Juan Island Community Transition Team

Team Contact: Dr. Carolyn Haugen
Principal/Coordinator, Title I
San Juan Island School District #149
PO Box 458, Friday Harbor WA 98250
Phone: (360) 378-5209
FAX: (360) 378-3405
Email: chaugen@sjisd.wednet.edu

Spanaway Community Transition Team

Team Contact: Betty Magee
Assistant Director Instructional Support
Bethel School District
516 E 176th Street, Spanaway WA 98387
Phone: (253) 539-6077
FAX: (253) 539-6087
Email: bmagee@mail.bethel.wednet.edu

Sumner School District

Team Contact: Keoni Smith
Preschool Coordinator
Sumner School District
1202 Wood Avenue, Sumner WA 98390
Phone: (253) 891-6039
FAX: (253) 891-6099
Email:
Keoni_Smith@sumner.wednet.edu

Wenatchee School District

Team Contact: Crystal Bragg
Wenatchee School district
112 S Elliott St., Wenatchee, WA 98801
Phone: (509) 663-7117
FAX: (509) 662-9227

White River Community Team

Team Contact: Katharine Haag
White River School District #416
PO Box 1686, Buckley WA 98321
Phone: (360) 829-0600, Ext. 275
FAX: (360) 829-3358
Email: khagg@whiteriver.wednet.edu

Yakima County STEPS Team

Team Contact: Dr. Pat Kramer
104 N. 4th Ave., Yakima, WA 98902
Phone: (509) 573-5089

Burlington Edison School District

Team Contact:
Don Hanson, Dir. Special Programs
Debbie Betschart-Allan, Early Childhood
Coordinator
927 East Fairhaven, Burlington, WA 98233
Phone: (360) 757-3311, ext. 225 or 212
Edison: (360) 757-3375
Fax: (360) 755-9198

East Valley School District

Team Contact: Maureen Lyden
12325 E Grace, Spokane, WA 99216
Phone: (509) 924-9823
Email: lydenm@evsd.org

Pend Oreille County STEPS

Team Contact: Rhonda Rothrock
ESD 101/Newport School District
1025 W Indiana Ave.
Spokane, WA 99205
Phone: (509) 447-3167 ext. 4106
Fax: (509) 625-5215
Email: arenschler@esd101.net

Sunnyside School District STEPS

Team Contact: Rubin Carrera
1110 South Sixth St.
Sunnyside, WA 98944
Phone: (509) 836-8401
Email: carrerar@sunnyside.wednet.edu

Whatcom County STEPS

Team Contact: Vicki Hubner
Nooksack Valley S.D.
PO Box 4307, Nooksack, WA 98276
Phone: (360) 988-4754
Email:
Vicki.hubner@nooksackschools.org

Whitman County STEPS

Team Contact: Sue Kreikemeier
Early Learning Services
115 NW State Street
Pullman, WA 99163
Phone: (509) 332-4420
Email: suek-els@pullman.com

Woodland School District

Team Contact: Debbie Kernen
Woodland School District
800 Third St., Woodland, WA 98674
Phone: (360) 225-1060
Email:
kernend@mail.woodland.wednet.edu



WASHINGTON PAVE
6316 S 12TH STREET, TACOMA, WA 98465

☐ Please add me to the direct mailing list:
